

**Remarks by Ambassador Harry K. Thomas, Jr.
Signing of Letter of Agreement
Inter-Agency Council against Trafficking
August 19, 2010**

Thank you, Secretary de Lima, for those inspiring words, and thank you, Secretary Baldoz, Undersecretaries Salazar, Bala, Conejos, Puno, and Transmonte, and other representatives of Philippine government agencies for the opportunity to share this occasion, signaling another milestone in our shared effort to end the scourge of human trafficking – a modern-day form of slavery.

Our two great nations share a strong and mutual commitment to protect and promote respect for human rights, and I want to thank each of you personally for your efforts to combat the gross injustice that is human trafficking.

This document we sign today will facilitate the work of a federal prosecutor, Ms. Sheila Phillips, who I know will work tirelessly to assist our Philippine partners in improving the prosecution of those who commit crimes of trafficking in any form, whether the victims are those forced into sexual servitude -- with all the dangers that entails -- or laborers whose simple desire for a better life is cruelly turned into abusive and uncompensated bondage in a foreign land.

Together, we will end their living hell and defeat this evil. *Samasama natin labanan ang trafficking at magtagumpay tayo.* I am deeply grateful for your shared commitment to this cause. Thank you.